2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

531 decorate a burial pole; and others, Pl. 2D, Pl. 10C, and Pl. 11A, similar to those he would paint on the ceremonial baskets.

I did not see or hear of figures being made in bark (Mountford, 1956, p. 443, fig. 65C, D); moulded in wax (Elkin and the Berndts, 1950, Pl. 21, Mountford, 1956, Pl. 143) or in the sands of the sea-shore (Mountford, 1956, p. 404, Pl. 91C, D), as is done in north-eastern Arnhem Land. Nevertheless, [532] the men did carve large burial poles in the form of human beings and smaller full-length figures, associated with the *pukamuni* ceremonies. These figures bore some small resemblance to those recorded from north-eastern Arnhem Land (Berndt, 1948, Figs. A, B, Pls. 1, 2; Mountford, 1956, Pls. 130–40).

3. TECHNIQUES

386 (*a*) COLOURS. The pigments used for the decoration of the burial poles and the production of the bark paintings, were red, yellow and white ochres. As there was no suitable black pigment on the islands, the artists used crushed charcoal in its place.

[317] The source of the best ochres is a pit at Imilu on Cape Van Diemen (Fig. 1). This ochre, called *imilu*, is a bright yellow when collected,[7] but, when heated in the fire, it changes to a clear red. A soft white stone is common along the beaches. The ochres are not ground on a stone, as on the mainland (Mountford, 1956, p. 11), but, being friable, are crushed and mixed in a large cockle shell with water and fixative.

The aborigines often spoke of a superior ochre at Numanira, northern Melville Island (Fig. 1), which could be gathered only at low tide. I did not see any of this ochre in use.

(*b*) FIXATIVES. Three different types of fixative are used to ensure that the painted designs, both on the poles and the baskets, were as permanent as [314] possible. They were: the sticky gelatinous sap of one of the tree orchids (*Dendrobium* sp.); the wax and honey of the wild bee, well mixed together; [237] and the yolks of the eggs of the sea-going turtle. The fixative was either mixed with the pigments or rubbed on the painting surface.

412 (*c*) BRUSHES. Simple brushes, made of strips of bark of varying widths, square across the bottom, chewed at one end, and held as in Fig. 2A and 2C, were used for the bulk of the work.[8] For making the dots, however, the artists used a

[423] [7] There did not appear to be any restriction on the gathering of this ochre; any aboriginal could go to Imilu and take as much as he wished.

[171] [8] The long flexible brush of the aborigines of Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956, p. 12, fig. 3), was not used at Melville Island, although the bark brush (Fig. 2B) was often held in a similar manner.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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8. THE CEREMONIAL OBJECTS OF THE TIWI

The ceremonial objects of the *pukamuni* ceremony, like the carved and painted burial poles and elaborate facial and body decorations already described, are totally unlike those used by the mainland aborigines. 301 778 765 [171]

A series of objects obtained on the 1954 expedition is illustrated on Pls. 31, 32.[84]

On Pl. 31, A, D, and G, are chest ornaments called *pukabinda*, which are suspended around the neck with a loop of human hair string. Fig. A is an oval ball of the soft wax of the native bee, into which has been pressed a large number of the red and black seeds of a jungle vine. Fig. D, made of several ovals of lawyer vine, is bound together with strips of the same material. The pendant is made of human hair and white cockatoo feathers. The oval opening is too small to pass over the head, therefore this ornament, and similar examples which I saw, were suspended around the neck with string. Fig. G is a flat disc like Fig. D, with lengths of lawyer vine bound together. This disc was coated with wax, and further decorated with red and black jungle seeds. [237]

Pl. 31E and F are ornaments, *palmatjinas*, decorated with red and black seeds, which are pushed up the arm over the elbow.[85] Both have been made in the same manner as Fig. D, G.

Pl. 31B is a goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, worn around the neck or tied around the upper arm. *Wurarbuti* (frontispiece) is wearing a *tokwianga*.

These ornaments are made by embedding ends of the downy feathers of the pied goose in a ball of wax. So much work was entailed in making a *tokwianga* that the aborigines were loth to part with them. The *tokwianga* is worn on all ceremonial occasions. [237]

Pl. 31C is a false beard, *baludi*, which was worn at the *ilanias*, the final *pukamuni* (see frontispiece), and the *kulama* rituals. The *baludi* may be pure decoration, or it may replace the beard, which up until comparatively recently was plucked out at both the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals. [302]

Fig. H illustrates three cane arm rings, *jairinis*, made from plaited lawyer vine. These were worn on the upper and lower arms of the *pukamuni* men and women, and occasionally by other performers, as decoration. At the end of the burial ceremony the performers take these rings from their arms and leave them on the grave as a present for the spirit of the dead.

[84] Spencer, 1928, Pl. XII, Figs. 450–4, illustrates a number of *pukamuni* ornaments he collected in 1911.

[85] Several of the men illustrated on Pl. 26a, are wearing these arm ornaments.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

301 bordered with red. Each of the intervening spaces is again sub-divided into two
531 squares at the centre (and a "half-square" at the sides) by three vertical, white lines bordered with red. The squares and "half-squares" are shaded diagonally with from four to six lines passing downwards and away from the central line in the topmost group, and upwards and away from the centre in the two lower groups of squares. The combined effect resembles the windmill or "wanningi" pattern [171] common throughout Australia. The shading is all in white on one side, but red and white in alternate squares on the opposite side.

301 In another type of this arm decoration, which is also made of bark, the upper
322 united portion is shorter than in the previous case (*vide* Plate VII, Figs. 1 and 3). The top edge is concave and only one oblong window is cut beneath it. The sides have been united by hem-stitching and by the insertion of a few wooden pins which answer the same purpose as rivets. The edges are thickly plastered with beeswax. As in the previous case, the stitches (and the plaster also) are continued only along one side of the loop. A fairly stout rod of wood projects vertically from either end of the top concave edge. Shorter rods project laterally from either top corner of the loop. To the end of each of these rods a plume of white is attached with beeswax. Cockatoo feathers have been chosen and they are [237 531] fastened by their distal ends so that the fluffy portions are exposed. A number of twisted strands of fur and vegetable fibre pass from the extremity of one horizontal rod diagonally upwards to the base of the vertical rod above, along it to the top, thence horizontally across to the top of the other vertical rod, whence it is continued the same way down the other side to the extremity of the opposite horizontal rod. Beeswax retains these strands in position at the rod-tops, while more strands, wound horizontally from the base of one vertical rod to the other, and also round the base of each, make the former strands secure there. The painted design in this
301 case consists of one large cruciform figure on either side of the looped portion, the
531 arms being modified at the base in a manner suggestive of a snake design. One arm of the cross is white, the other yellow, both being bordered with red. The intervening spaces are shaded red and yellow, the constituent lines being parallel and straight up-and-down in the upper segment and crossed in the lower.

532 *Corrobboree-mask.*—An interesting object is what I take to be a corrobboree-mask (*vide* Plate XV, Fig. 5). As I did not see it in use and did not receive the specimen until it was too late to make inquiries, I cannot, with certainty, describe it as such. The object represents an oval structure, 15 centimetres long and 8 wide, which encloses two connected circular rims resembling a solid pair of spectacles. The internal framework is made of split cane, bound together with vegetable strands. The oval portion is covered with human hair string, wound around it and knotted along the outer edge after the modern "button-hole-stitch" fashion. The rims are broad and covered with beeswax. A circle of the red beans of *Abrus precatorius*, embedded in the wax, surrounds the "eye-holes" on the front side. At one of the lateral extremities, a band of five human hair strings emerges from a cylindrical mass of beeswax and is surrounded, at 6 centimetres distance,

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 O120 Tiwi O120

by a similar mass, whence two strings only continue for 40 odd centimetres. 532
The whole length of the band, therefore, amounts to approximately 50 centimetres.
Its object is, no doubt, to fasten the mask in position over the face during corrobboree ceremonies.

Domestic Utensils.

Food carriers.—The most common form of "nika" or carrier for food and 322
other articles is one made of a single piece of bark of the "stringy bark" eucalypt 415
(*vide* Plate VIII, Figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6). An oblong piece of such bark, say 1 metre long by 40 centimetres broad, is frankly cut and folded transversely at its centre. The edges on either side are pared down, then laid flat, one over the other, and sewn or laced together with plain "run-on" stitches, 2 centimetres apart. A row of slanting and overlapping stitches often skirts the open edge at a short distance down; occasionally, too, part of the edge is cross-hemstitched and plastered with beeswax. The object of this procedure is to prevent the bark from tearing by virtue of its fibrous structure. The open mouth of the carrier is nearly circular or oval; in the latter case the long axis of the oval runs at right angles to the base-edge of the implement. These carriers are of various sizes; the largest that came under observation measured 63 centimetres in height and 43 in width at the base. Ordinarily they are unpainted, but on special occasions elaborate designs, consisting 415
of circles, oblong and other figures, with cross-hatched shading, are drawn on the 53
outer surface in red, yellow, white, and black. The designs are best studied by reference to the reproductions (*vide* Plate VIII, Figs. 5 and 6). Occasionally tassel-shaped appendages are noticed at one of the convex outer surfaces of the mouth of the carrier. These consist of a flattish, egg-shaped mass of beeswax (studded on the surface with the red beans of *Abrus precatorius*), which is suspended by two twisted fur strings (*vide* Plate VIII, Fig. 6).

Water carriers.—Water is taken to camp from a soakage or spring in simple [312]
structures made out of the bark of the paper-bark tree (*Melaleuca sp.*). An oblong 322
piece of this bark is bent upon itself longitudinally, both its ends folded several 415
times and kept together by binding with cane or by spiking with short pointed wooden pegs (*vide* Plate VIII, Figs. 1 and 2).

Drinking vessels.—Several natural objects are used for drinking vessels. 415
Among the most common are the discarded tests of molluscs. The species *Melo-* [237]
dinaea and *Fusus prini* were found in use at several native wells (*vide* Plate XIV, Figs. 1 and 2).

But when no such shells are available a piece of bark is torn or cut from a 322
tree (usually from a *Melaleuca*) and folded so as to form a water-tight cup (*vide* 415
Plate XIV, Figs. 3 and 4). This piece of bark, which measures about 20 centimetres by 20, is folded longitudinally at about its middle (*vide* Fig. 3, D). Both ends are then bent upon themselves at right angles to this plane and at about one quarter the whole length from either end. The overturned ends and the inner

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

They are occasionally coloured and decorated with ochre, some of the designs being very pleasing to the eye. Some spears, moreover, have human 471
hair strings wound round the shaft, immediately below the head, for a distance of [531]
10 centimetres or more, and this is kept in place with beeswax.

Canoes.

Elsewhere I have referred to the marked absence among the northern 501
Australian tribes of anything but the most primitive crafts and such innovated forms as have resulted from the contact with the white and yellow races. They are, therefore, not to be considered as truly indigenous canoes. On Bathurst Island, however, conditions are different; due, perhaps, in the first place, to its insularity (as well as the numerous estuaries and rivers that cross [133]
the land), and, secondly, to the proximity of Melville Island, which is separated from it by only a narrow stretch of calm water known as Apsley Strait. The latter is barely a mile in width at its narrowest points. Numerous canoes are in use within this Strait, and occasionally, when wind and water are favourable, they venture a short distance out to sea. One type is principally in use, namely, a large bark-canoe measuring about 560 centimetres in length (*vide* Plate X, Figs. 1 and 2). It is made of a single sheet of bark, usually from suitable, straight, clear 396
trunks of the woollybutt (*Eucalyptus miniata*) or the stringy-bark (*E. tetradonta*) 501
(*vide* Plate XII, Fig. 1). It is cut from the tree by chopping transversely at the respective distances from the ground, then slitting it once vertically for the whole length and removing it by forcing the edge of the instrument under the bark and finally levering it off with pointed saplings. The outer side of this oblong piece of bark, which is rough, will become the inside surface of the canoe. At a distance of from 65 to 70 centimetres from either end, transverse cuts are made on the inside to a depth of half the thickness of the bark, and such thickness is removed from the whole of the surface lying away from the centre at either incision. Each end is thus reduced by half its original strength and material thereby becoming more pliable. The cutting is done with the sharp edge of a [237 412]
bivalve shell, usually a *Cyrena*. The subtilized ends of the sheet may, or may not, be held over a glowing fire to render them more pliant still. The sheet is folded lengthwise along its middle, and one or both ends kept together by vertical stakes, stuck in the ground and tied together at the top. The bottom corner of the fold is cut away in a very gentle upward slope. The two pieces of the fold are next held firmly together and cut in a more decisive upward direction from a point some 30 to 50 centimetres from the bottom edge end. The two freshly cut edges are neatly sewn with close, overcast stitches, and the same is done along the top horizontal edge for a distance of some 15 or 20 centimetres from the end. From the intervening space between the sewn parts at the top and bottom, an angular or curved segment is cut out in imitation of a fish-tail and its edges laced together in a like manner (*vide* Plate XI, Figs. 1 and 2). The thread used for these "run-on" stitches is in the form of strips from the split sheets of the

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20

climbing palm (*Calamus Australis*).[1] Holes are previously pierced through the bark with an awl, made out of the leg-bone of a wallaby.

The stitches are made more secure and watertight by plastering them with wax from the comb of the wild bee (*Trigona sp.*) or with one of the several resins so extensively used by all natives. The inside corners are caulked with plastic clay and fibre, or resin. Two stays or struts of fairly stout timber, cut to the required length and inserted at the points where the bark was reduced to half its thickness, keep the sides of the canoe apart. From these points, therefore, the sides of the canoe converge to the bow at one end and to the stern at the other; while in between they are more or less parallel. The canoe, if there be any difference at all, is wider aft (74 cm.) than it is nearer the bow (55 cm.); the "fish-tail" incision, too, is acute and deep at the bow and more rounded and shallow at the stern (*vide* Plate XI, Figs. 1 and 2). Along the top, inner, edge of either side of the canoe, a straight strengthening pole is lashed with distant, unequally-spaced and grouped "run on" stitches of cane-strips. These structures lend considerable rigidity to the gunwale of the canoe; they do not extend throughout the whole length, but, being straight, are more or less parallel one to another, and do not enclose the stern or bow. Major Campbell,[2] in referring to the bark canoes seen by him while at Fort Dundas, states that "the gunwales are strengthened by two small saplings (such as grow in marshy places) fastened together at each end of the canoe." This method is more like that in use on the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria to-day and was not observed on the islands by me. Long shoots of vines and strips of cane are wound crosswise from side to side of the canoe, and at the same time take in the strengthening-poles along the gunwale. Additional circumferential winding binds the separate cords into one thick rope. Four of such ties are spanned at equal distances, from one side to the other, along the straight edges of the canoe. They not only preserve its shape, but afford a ready means by which the craft may be carried.

The canoe is not decorated in any way, but smears of various colours are noticed both at the bow and the stern, resulting from the handling by fingers previously occupied in decorative work with ochre. When not in use the canoes are "housed" on a level piece of ground, under the overhanging branches of a shady banyan or guttapercha tree. They are laid in normal upright position (not inverted), and are kept so by short supports of timber stemmed against the sides. The bark thus dries in the required shape and does not become lop-sided.

Each canoe has its recognized place. Where a dense growth of mangroves skirts the foreshore, a regular approach to the water is kept clear by cutting away the trees. The paddles are laid within the canoes.

Quite a large number of natives may be carried in a canoe, if the occasion

[1] Compare narrative of Mr. Carron in MacGillivray's *Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* 1852, vol. ii, pp. 125 and 126; also P. P. King: *Narrative Survey Intertropical Western Coasts of Australia*, London, 1827, vol. i, p. 90.

[2] *Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc.*, London, vol. iv, 1834, p. 156.

123 ping the axe with his teeth, he ran up the sapling on all fours with
222 as much agility as a monkey. Upon reaching the crotch, he put his
481 arms around the trunk, placed the soles of his feet close together against the bark, and quickly progressed in a sort of leaping motion up to the top of the tree. Once there he casually climbed up, over, and around the various branches, until he reached the object of his climb, the hollow branch with the little hole through which was passing a steady stream of small insects. This branch was quickly cut through and fell crashing to the ground. Soon Albert was down again, investigating this find with Agnes and me. The hole was enlarged and the combs of dark honey exposed, still crawling with the little black bees. We dug in with our fingers or
[133] brushes made by chewing small twigs, quite unmindful of the bees, who obligingly never developed stings in this part of the world.
[262 The honey was dark and very strong, but when mixed with the dry,
●237] crumbly, yellow "bee bread" a nice balance of taste was obtained. It took the three of us very little time to finish the sugar-bag and off we went—this time in a homeward direction.

123 The one possum looked very small and Albert again began mut-
224 tering about "someone *mobuditi* make me bad luck." We separated
[777] again and when almost to the creek Agnes suddenly held me back and cautioned silence. Carefully she picked up a stout stick from the ground and then approached what I suddenly noticed was a very fat goana, about two feet long, apparently sound asleep on a nearby tree trunk. One quick blow and the lizard fell to the ground, quite dead. We carried the catch to the landing and quickly had another swim before Albert caught up. We were gathering firewood when Albert arrived and explained his delay by holding up another
123 possum. The second possum was immediately gutted, then both
252 were laid on the fire and turned frequently until all the fur had been burned off and the skin made brittle. The animals were quartered and laid again on the fire until well roasted. The goana received no preliminary treatment before going on the fire. When all were
[264] cooked, they were removed and laid on a "table" of clean, green
123 leaves, and we reached in and tore off pieces of the steaming, juicy
262 meat. It is impossible to describe this meat to someone who has not tasted it. All I can say is that it was tender and tasty and perfectly